

REMARKS

With this paper, Applicants have amended pages 1, 2 and 6 of the specification, amended claims 1-3 and 6-9, canceled claim 12-13, and added new claims 14 and 15. Claims 1-11 and 14-15 are pending. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is requested.

Claim Objections

Claim 1 was objected to for including the term "i.e.". Claim 1 has been amended to remove such terms. Withdrawal of the objection is requested.

Claim Rejections - Section 112

Claims 3 and 6-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Claims 3 and 6-9 have been amended to better clarify the claims and claims 12 and 13 have been canceled. The amendments to claim 9 address the issues of claims 10 and 11. Withdrawal of this rejection is requested.

Claim Rejections - Section 101

Claims 7, 8, 12 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101. Claims 7 and 8 have been amended to better clarify the claims and claims 12 and 13 have been canceled. Withdrawal of this rejection is requested.

Claim Rejections - Section 103

Claims 1-6 and 9-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stamm (U.S. Patent No. 5,885,949). Applicants disagree.

The pending claims, all in some manner, are directed to solid, shaped cleaning bodies and use of those cleaning bodies to form a liquid cleaning concentrate, which, upon further dilution, forms a ready-to-use cleaning solution. The shaped cleaning bodies are made of a solid cleaner mass surrounded by a water-soluble shell. All of the pending claims recite that the shaped body has a narrow elongate form, either as a cylinder (which has a circular cross-sectional shape) or with an elliptical or rectangular cross-sectional shape. The width of the shaped cleaning body, at its widest point is 1 to 3 cm and the length of the shaped cleaning body is at least twice its widest

width. The example on page 4, lines 27-28, was of a cylinder 15 cm long having a circular cross-sectional diameter of 3 cm. The example on page 4, line 30 to page 5, line 1, was of a body 8 cm long having an elliptical cross-sectional shape, the ellipse being 1.5 cm in the short dimension and 2.5 cm in the widest dimension. This narrow elongate form facilitates placing the shaped body into a container, such as a bottle, the narrow form easily fitting through the bottle's neck opening.

There is no discussion in Stamm regarding the shape or size of the shaped body. Stamm merely indicates that the material can be any suitable size (giving examples of 5 grams and 30 grams). There is no suggestion as to the shape of the body, other than it being a pellet or a tablet. A pellet is usually a spherical or generally rounded mass, typically small in size. A tablet is a disk-shaped mass, generally having a diameter greater than its thickness. Both pellets and tablets would be more difficult to handle and place in a bottle than narrow elongate bodies claimed, which have a widest diameter of 1 to 3 cm and a length at least twice the diameter.

The Office Action acknowledges that Stamm fails to disclose a solid body having a water soluble shell surrounding a solid cleaner, but contends that it would have been obvious to expect a water soluble shell surrounding the components because Stamm teaches mixing the ingredients, including PVA, together. The Office Action continues that the resulting product would be a body having PVA distributed throughout. According to the Office Action, this would result in a water soluble shell surrounding the components. Applicants disagree that the structure of Stamm would be the same as the structure of the present invention.

To better clarify the configuration of the claimed shaped bodies, the pending claims have been amended to clarify that the shaped bodies have a solid cleaner mass and a water-soluble shell surrounding the solid cleaner mass. The Examples on pages 5 and 6 of the application provide the ingredients that form the solid cleaner mass, either as a powder, granules, or paste. Page 6, lines 13-15 then describe that the cleaners were accommodated in water-soluble shells.

In sum, Stamm does not teach or suggest a narrow elongate shape, nor does Stamm teach or suggest a water-soluble shell around the solid cleaner mass. At least for these reasons, Applicants contend that the pending claims are allowable over Stamm, and request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-6 and 9-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gladfelter et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,234,615). Applicants disagree.

Gladfelter et al. do not recognize the desired shape and size of the shaped body, i.e., narrow elongate bodies having a widest diameter of 1 to 3 cm and a length at least twice the diameter. Various dimensions and shapes are provided in Gladfelter et al., however, these do not lead one to the shape and size recited in the pending claims. Gladfelter et al. teach having compressed solids sized from fractions of inches or greater and preferably from about 2 inches in diameter (column 8, lines 3-5), and cast solids from about 4 to 12 inches and most preferably from about 6 to 8 inches (column 8, lines 7-10). Gladfelter et al. teach block, pellets and granules, and, cylinder 20 in FIGS. 1-3. As one can see from FIGS. 1-3, however, this cylinder is short and squat, not narrow elongate, as are the shaped bodies of the pending invention. The narrow elongate form, as recited of the pending claims, facilitates placing the shaped body into a container, such as a bottle, the narrow form easily fitting through the bottle's neck opening. The short cylinder of Gladfelter et al. would be difficult to pass through a bottle's neck opening.

Applicants also contend that Gladfelter et al. do not teach having a water-soluble shell surrounding the solid cleaner mass. Rather, Gladfelter et al. have a film around the cleaner material. As discussed throughout Gladfelter et al., the material is a polymeric film, about 1-15 mils thick (column 15, line 67). The examples discuss using film and film bags (columns 14-17). When one thinks of film and film bags, the thoughts are to plastic wraps (such as SARAN wrap) and to sandwich bags. Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines a film as "a thin skin or membranous covering" or a "thin covering or coating". The claims of the pending invention recite a water-soluble shell (emphasis added). Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines a shell as a "hard rigid ... covering" or a "hard or tough outer covering". A shell, as recited in Applicants' claims, is different than the film of Gladfelter et al.

In sum, Gladfelter et al. do not teach or suggest a narrow elongate shape, nor do Gladfelter et al. teach or suggest a water-soluble shell. At least for these reasons, Applicants contend that the pending claims are allowable over Gladfelter et al., and request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Appln no. 10/048,043
Amendment dated June 22, 2004
Reply to Office Action of March 26, 2004


SUMMARY

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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